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The Primary Source

Newsletter of the Society of Mississippi Archivists

Volume 2

February, 1980

Number 1

ARCHIVES IN BLOOM

- Ronald E. Tomlin

Spring will be a flourishing time for the archival profession in Mississippi. Workshops and meetings are the order of the season. March winds will usher in a significant event for archivists in the Gulf states. The Society of American Archivists will conduct a basic archival workshop at the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson, on March 24 - 26. The workshop, which is being co-sponsored by the Department of Archives and History and the Society of Mississippi Archivists, is part of an SAA program to support and give direction to short-term archival education. It is open to those currently working full- or part-time in the archival field who have little or no training in archival administration. Workshop faculty will focus on the rudiments of archival theory and practice: the nature and terminology of archives and manuscripts, appraisal and accession, conservation, repository management, and professional problems. Participants will receive practical experience in these areas of archival science. Faculty for the workshop will include Anne P. Diffendal, Manuscript Curator, Nebraska State Historical Society; William L. Joyce, Curator of Manuscripts and Education Officer, American Antiquarian Society; Patrick B. Nolan, University Archivist and Associate Professor of History, Wright State University; and Trudy Huskamp Peterson, Assistant to the Deputy Archivist and Director of the Modern Archives Institute, National Archives and Records Service. A registration fee of \$40 covers the cost of the facilities, instructional materials and related expenses. For further information and an application, contact Tom Pardo, Program Officer, Society of American Archivists, 330 S. Wells Street, Suite 810, Chicago, Illinois 60606. The application deadline for the workshop is February 29, 1980.

April showers will bring in the second annual meeting of the Society of Mississippi Archivists. A disaster workshop will begin activities on April 15 at the Downtowner Motor Inn in Jackson. The Society is joining the Mississippi Department of Archives and History in sponsoring this disaster preparedness and recovery seminar. The program will feature remarks on fire protection by the State Fire Marshall, John Chamblee, and the roll of document depositories in the overall civil defense for the state by Dennis Lawrence of the Mississippi Civil Defense Council. Highlighting the workshop will be a presentation by George Cumha, director emeritus of the New England Document Conservation Center, and an expert in the field of disaster preparedness.

The Society opens its annual meeting on the morning of April 16, also at the Downtowner. Gloria Atkinson, archivist at the Mississippi University for Women, is program chairperson, and she reports that plans for the meeting are progressing nicely. Members of the Society can look forward to stimulating and provocative sessions. You will receive more specific information and pre-registration forms during March. Registration deadline for the disaster workshop and the annual meeting is April 7.

The Primary Source is a quarterly publication of news and ideas produced by the Society of Mississippi Archivists, a non-profit organization of professional archivists and interested persons. Subscription to The Primary Source is included in the Society membership dues. Membership information is printed on the last page of each newsletter.

Deadlines for inclusion are:

- #1 (February) -- January 31
- #2 (May) -- April 30
- #3 (August) -- July 31
- #4 (November) -- October 31

Your contributions are welcome. Write The Primary Source, P. O. Box 571, Jackson, MS 39205

h t holmesEditor

FROM THE PRESIDENT -

In the last issue of The Primary Source, Governor William Winter emphasized the importance of archival work in Mississippi. Significantly, he identified some of the problems encountered by archivists in the state, and he pledged to work with archivists to seek solutions to these problems. Indeed, Mississippi archivists are fortunate to have a governor who endorses and supports their efforts. The Society also is honored to have Governor Winter as one of its members.

The Executive Council met on January 31, 1980, in Jackson. At that meeting Gloria Atkinson, Mississippi University for Women archivist, was confirmed as chairman of the Program Committee. She received program ideas from the council and is busily preparing for the April 14-15 meeting. As the Society's constitution requires, program announcements will be sent to the membership well ahead of the meeting.

-SC

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR -

The Society enters the second month of 1980 with 300 members (sixty-seven new members and 233 renewals from last year). The renewal total represents 51.5% of last year's membership. Former members who have not renewed have been dropped from the rolls and will not receive future literature unless they rejoin the Society. If you know former or prospective members, dues of \$5.00 may be sent to our treasurer, Anne S. Wells, P. O. Box 5408, Mississippi State, Mississippi 39762.

The Society is changing its headquarter's mailing address. Be on the lookout in a future mailing for the new post office box. This change is an effort to eliminate confusion between the Society and the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, whose address the Society has been using up until this time.

We are looking forward to our annual meeting, scheduled for Jackson on April 16, and the disaster workshop being co-sponsored by the Society with the Mississippi Department of Archives and History to be held on the day prior to the annual meeting, also in Jackson. Your executive director is in charge of local arrangements, and plans are proceeding nicely. You will be receiving the annual meeting program and pre-registration form during March.

I am happy to report that the Society is also co-sponsoring a basic archival workshop being conducted by the Society of American Archivists on March 24-26 at the Archives and History Building in Jackson. This workshop by the national archival association is quite an honor for Mississippi, and we anticipate that the workshop will be a great success. It will offer a grand opportunity for us to advertise the archival profession in Mississippi.

We appreciate the continued support and interest exhibited by the membership of the Society. You may be assured that we shall continue to strive to serve our membership and the archival profession in Mississippi.

-RET

NHPRC NEWS -

(Ed. Note: These verbatim extracts are from unofficial minutes, provided by NHPRC, of the NHPRC Caucus at the SAA meeting last September 26 and from the September 20 AASLH session "NHPRC's Historical Records Grant Program: An Appraisal." While we in Mississippi have not yet encountered the problems mentioned here, it will be perhaps educational to learn how other states have gotten along with NHPRC. SMA secretary Ron Tomlin has copies of the complete texts of the minutes.)

AASLH 9/20/79

The session opened with a presentation by Russell Fridley of the Minnesota Historical Society. He made two initial points. First, the structure of the present NHPRC program, that is its placement in the National Archives, was unfortunate because the NHPRC's purpose was different from that of NARS and because it forced the program to compete with NARS for congressional funding. Second, the addition of the records program to the NHPRC had raised expectations that something comprehensive could be done about the massive historical records problem in this country. These expectations have diminished a great deal over the past few years because of the low level of funding for the program; everyone Fridley talks with seems to share this view.

Robert Richmond reviewed the history of the Kansas State Historical Records Advisory Board. He said that the failure of NHPRC to provide funds for expenses of Board members is a problem, especially when one considers the high cost of gasoline and motel accommodations. Richmond assessed the work of the Kansas Board; individually, Board members are fine, but collectively their work leaves something to be desired. They have strong historical backgrounds and are generally more interested "in what is in the records than they are in what shape the records are in or perhaps what might be necessary to preserve it." He also said that perhaps people were disap-

pointed in the records program because they had prematurely assumed that it would or should operate very similar to the historic preservation program or to the NEH or NEA state-based programs. Richmond closed by saying that there is a need for much better missionary work in the state to help at the grass roots level.

Larry Hackman (NHPRC) commented on Fridley's statement that the NHPRC was "in competition" with NARS. This is not exactly the case. The relationship might be described as an orange in a basket of apples in that the NHPRC is not like other NARS programs. He noted that for a long period the Commission was an advisory rather than a funding agency and that it continues to see itself as more than just a granting program. The Commission wanted to set up a state-level mechanism and did so with the advisory board system. It wanted to work closely with the boards in setting priorities, fostering some strong projects (especially a variety of models and pilots) as a way to indicate needs and possibilities. The Commission hoped that the boards, applicants and the Commission could learn together something about what works and doesn't work, and would try to build a base of experience, visibility, interest and support for the future.

A member of the audience rose to note that the state boards, like the Commission, were "unwanted children" in their respective states. He was amused that so many people wanted the Commission to model itself after the historic preservation program. He felt that the NHPRC was one of the friendliest agencies in Washington. Other agencies, like historic preservation, have so much bureaucracy and so much red tape, at the state level as well as the federal, that it would be sad to go that route. So much money goes to administration that only a small portion "trickles down" to meet real needs.

H. G. Jones argued that the state coordinators should form an executive committee to work out an apportionment

(continued on p. 6)

NEWS AND NOTES -

ARKANSAS ARCHIVISTS AND RECORDS MANAGERS

A new regional organization was established on November 5, 1979. Arkansas Archivists and Records Managers (AARM) is committed to the promotion of preservation, description, use, administration and accessibility of archives and manuscripts according to sound archival principles and to the promotion of education and training of archivists, manuscript curators, records managers and other interested persons in accord with professional standards. Officers elected at the organizational meeting are Edwina Walls, University of Arkansas Medical Sciences Campus, President; Russell Baker, Arkansas History Commission, Vice-President; Laura Phillips, Dept. of Human Services, Secretary; and Yvonne Phillips, Olsten Temporary Services, Treasurer. Lyn Ewbank, Arkansas History Commission, was appointed newsletter editor.

MISSISSIPPI UNIVERSITY FOR WOMEN

The University's Archives and Museum Department has published an Introductory Guide to the Tenn-Tom Archives. Documents described in the guide are open for research on a non-restricted basis. The Guide was prepared by Mrs. Gloria L. Atkinson, Archivist, assisted by Susan H. Martin. Copies of the Guide may be obtained by writing Mrs. Atkinson at the Mississippi University for Women, Box 369, Columbus, Mississippi 39701.

NHPRC

The 1978 Annual Report of the National Historical Publications and Records Commission has been published, as has A Report to the President, the first such report since 1963.

NORTHWEST ARCHIVISTS, INC.

Regional workshops on Disaster Action Team Development are being held this winter in Oregon, Washington, Idaho and Montana. Sponsored by the Northwest Archivists, Inc., and funded by the NEH, Division of Research Grants, the workshops feature slides and discussion of disaster salvage operations, the how-to of developing disaster action teams, and hands-on instruction on sal-

vaging water-damaged materials.

UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

Five national experts on the preservation of print and non-print library materials will be featured during a colloquium to be presented at the University of Oklahoma, April 17-19. Topics will include the importance of disaster planning by libraries, setting up preservation programs, and the paperless information systems of the future.

Leading the sessions during the colloquium will be George M. Cunha, director emeritus of the New England Document Conservation Center; Pamela W. Darling, head of the Preservation Department at Columbia University; F. W. Frisid Lancaster, professor of library sciences at the University of Illinois; Lawrence Robinson, preservation officer of microfilming for the Library of Congress; and Sarah "Sally" A. Buchanan, conservation officer for Stanford University Libraries.

For information about the colloquium contact Ms. Marcia Goodman, History of Science Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, OK 73019.

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS

Kenneth W. Rendell, internationally known manuscript dealer and recognized authority on the authentication of documents, will speak at the University of Texas on April 9, 1980. His talk on the methods of authentication and the techniques of monetary evaluation will be open to the public.

How to recognize authentic documents, how to distinguish them from fakes, forgeries and similes - will be Rendell's topic in the morning session. He will discuss the nature and composition of both paper and ink, as well as distinguishing features of handwriting. His points will be illustrated with slides.

During the afternoon, Mr. Rendell will talk on facts a manuscript dealer considers - and the weight he gives them - in placing a figure on one document or an entire collection.

A fee of \$15.00 will be charged. For further information, contact David B. Gracy II, Graduate School of Library Science, UT, Austin, Texas 78712.

ACCESSIONS AND OPENINGS

MISS. DEPARTMENT OF ARCHIVES AND HISTORY

Accessions

Department of Education
Lists of Educable Children
c. 1908-1958
59 cubic feet

Lists of educable children were prepared for the State Department of Education. These lists were removed from the basement of the New Capitol Building.

Governor's Office
1972-1980
1 cubic foot

Executive Orders, nos. 101-296,
1972-1980; Proclamations, 1974-1980.

Legislature

Special Parchman Investigation Committee
January 31, 1968

Audiotape recordings of an investigation by a special committee of the House of Representatives concerning prisoner unrest at Parchman. The tapes have been transcribed by MDAH.

Openings

Work Projects Administration
1936-1942
326 cubic feet

The files of the Mississippi Work Projects (formerly Works Progress) Administration including records for the administration, the Federal Writers' Projects, the Historical Records Survey and the Statewide Veterans' Grave Registrations.

MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY
Mitchell Memorial Library

Accessions

Gil Carmichael Papers
1960-1980
65 linear feet

Correspondence, speeches, photographs, slides, videotapes, clippings,

campaign memorabilia. Major subjects include Mississippi politics, the Republican Party and the transportation industry.

Donated by Gilbert E. Carmichael.

MISSISSIPPI UNIVERSITY FOR WOMEN
Archives and Museums Department

Accessions

Emma Ody Pohl Collection
1907-1976
15 cubic feet

Includes original choreography outlines, music, correspondence, photographs, speeches, class notes and artifacts of the first head of the Physical Education Dept. at MUW. This remarkable, nationally known pioneer in physical education and the dance was the recipient of many honors.

Donated by the MUW Alumnae Office and niece, Marie Charlotte Stark, Washington, D. C.

Tennessee-Tombigbee Archival Collection
1950-1979
165 cubic feet

Correspondence, documents, photographs, clipping files - the complete history of the Waterway documented.

Donated by the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway Development Authority, Columbus, Mississippi.

UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI
Archives and Special Collections

Accessions

Richard Wright Collection
ca. 1940-1960
112 items

Addition to Richard Wright Collection: 112 photographs documenting the life of the expatriate Mississippi author in Paris and in Africa.

Donated by Michael Fabre.

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NHPRC, cont.

formula that would be acceptable to all. He does not want large state bureaucracies to handle the records program, but he did want the Commission to pay more attention to the priorities of the state boards.

Larry Tise (N. Carolina Dept. of Archives & History) added that the Historic Preservation Program was not a good model. It is not really a grants program; it had started out as an assistance program to help the states organize their historical preservation programs - to develop staff and capabilities. In this, it has been very successful. The records program started out with this objective, but the committees "are dying on the vine."

Hackman responded to this by noting that people tend to look at a list of Commission grants and assume that this is what the Commission wanted to fund. This is often not the case. The Commission doesn't get excited about all of its projects. The Commission does prefer planning grants which provide leverage and promise future program development along the lines Tise seems attracted to. Hackman concluded by noting the Commission's frustration at how few proposals fit into the Commission's list of "invited proposals," which emphasizes comprehensive and future-oriented proposals. It is very easy for states not to seize the opportunities presented by the records program but then to complain when more narrowly focused projects are supported.

SAA 9/26/79

Larry Hackman informed the audience that funding for the next two years was to be the same as 1979, which meant that the Commission would be forced to continue to reject a substantial number of proposals recommended by the state boards. Since these rejections often precipitate tension between the boards and the Commission, Hackman asked if there were useful ways (other than grant review) for the

boards to participate in the work of the Commission.

Charles Lee (S. Carolina) remarked that the Commission should divide up its funds "even steven" among the states.

The focus of the caucus turned to a discussion of funding to support the work of the boards themselves. Frank Burke (NHPRC) reminded the audience that if funds were divided evenly among the states, such a division would provide each state with only about \$40,000. Allen Jones of Auburn University (and a member of the Alabama board) questioned whether most state coordinators were competent enough to handle even so small amount of money. Edward Papenfuss, Maryland coordinator, attributed the lackluster performance of many state coordinators and boards to a lack of staff support to devote to the program. Cleo Hughes, Tennessee coordinator, challenged the notion that coordinators and boards were overburdened by their work. She noted that her role as coordinator took only one to two percent of her time.

The discussion shifted to the performance and qualifications of the state boards and their coordinators. Jones criticized the system for giving too much authority to the coordinators to the detriment of applicants in the state. An uninterested coordinator can prevent applicants and others from making use of the records program.

Burke noted that some have suggested that board members should elect the coordinators; Jones retorted that such a procedure would be the "blind leading the blind." He added that he would do away with the board system entirely; he trusted the judgment of the Commission and its staff.

The caucus then turned its attention to the evaluation records of the state boards. William Koelch (Clark University) and a member of the Massachusetts board suggested that if the boards had been recommending the great majority of the state proposals, it was due either to the naivete of the state boards in passing through proposals to the Commission or to a prescreening process insuring that the quality of proposals

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GENEALOGICAL RECORDS -

Jo Cille Hafter
Genealogical Editor

(Cont. from last issue)

Naturalization records are on file in the county in which the person appeared to be naturalized. The Works Progress Administration compiled a book (on file at MDAH) of those persons in Mississippi applying for naturalization. After 1906, naturalizations were taken over by the Bureau of Immigration in Washington.

Of some help in locating an ancestor are tax rolls. Tax rolls are annual lists of persons paying personal and real estate taxes within a county and are on file in the tax assessor's office in the county in which the tax was paid or in the state tax assessor's office. These will assist in determining whether or not a person resided and owned property in a particular county during a given year. The years available for tax rolls vary, since, after the tax was paid, the books were sometimes discarded. The books were to be kept for a period of time, but the maintenance of records is not always complete.

The easiest source to use, and sometimes the most helpful, is birth and death records. No birth or death records were kept in Mississippi prior to 1912. The Mississippi State Board of Health, Bureau of Vital Statistics, Jackson, has kept birth and death records since that time. Delayed birth certificates are on file at the Board of Health for those persons applying for a certificate of birth prior to 1912. MDAH has mortality schedules for Mississippi for 1850, 1860, 1870 and 1880. These schedules include only those deaths occurring during the six months preceeding the census year and the first six months of the census year (July 1 to June 30). The mortality schedules are arranged by county, but are not indexed.

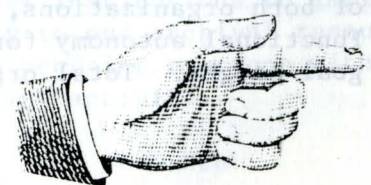
The most complete listing of cemetery and Bible records for Mississippi has been compiled by the Mis-

issippi Genealogical Society. In 1978, this society published its seventeenth volume of Mississippi Cemetery and Bible Records. Each volume of this series is indexed by name, while volume 27 contains a cumulative index of the cemetery and Bible family names.

Estate records in Mississippi remain on file in the office of the chancery clerk in the county where a person died. Microfilm copies of the state's probate records are on file at MDAH, compliments of the Morman microfilming program.

Newspapers are the least accurate, but sometimes the most helpful of all sources for genealogists. Each chancery clerk is required to keep a copy of the official newspapers printed in his county on file in the county courthouse. However, some clerks allow the newspaper office to retain the "official" copies of the newspapers. MDAH probably has the most complete listing of newspapers in Mississippi. An earnest attempt has been to collect copies, if not originals, of all Mississippi newspapers prior to 1900. Since that time, as money, space and time allow, a collection has been made of all newspapers printed within the state. The newspapers on file at MDAH are indexed by title, place of publication and dates available. Most of the state's colleges and universities are making a similar collection of newspapers for historical research, as well as genealogy.

Church records in Mississippi have generally remained in the custody of the church officers. The Mississippi Baptist Historical Commission (at Mississippi College) has made a concerted effort to collect the records of the Southern Baptist Convention churches in Mississippi, while the Catholic Diocese of Natchez-Jackson has made a similar effort for the Catholic church in Mississippi. However, most of the small local churches still retain their original record books, and a genealogist must contact them individually for information relative to their research.





The Society of American Archivists

330 S. Wells Street, Suite 810, Chicago, Illinois 60606 (312) 922-0140

STATEMENT PREPARED BY FELLOWS OF THE SOCIETY OF AMERICAN ARCHIVISTS EMPLOYED BY
THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES & RECORDS SERVICE

September 1979

(Furnished to President Carter and GSA Administrator Freeman in October)

1. Dispersion of Records

Based on close to fifty years of experience with archival methodology in this country, and the unfortunate past application of alternatives in other countries, especially archival reorganization by subject in France, it is agreed that gross departure from fundamental archival principles of rational centralization of records can only lead to chaos, a disservice to the government agencies whose records the archives holds, and a severe inconvenience to the ultimate user of those records.

2. Unilateral Archival Decisions

The Administrator of General Services should not unilaterally make and enforce archival decisions which are primarily professional in character. In important matters relating to the preservation, geographical distribution or disposal of Federal records there should be appropriate professional consultation with representatives of Federal agencies, principal user communities, historians of Federal programs, responsible NARS staff members, and other competent archivists.

3. Microreproduction of Records

Reproduction of archival materials in microform, and disposal of original documents after such reproduction is appropriate in selected cases. Selection of records for microform reproduction should be based solely on professional archival considerations that take into account the cost of page-by-page film inspection by an archivist, as well as the condition, form, content and research value of the records.

4. Appointment of the Archivist of the United States

Selection and appointment of the Archivist of the United States should be made only after a broad search through the appropriate professions, and consultation with representatives of the professional groups most immediately concerned with the preservation and use of the historical record. As a minimum, these groups should be those represented on the National Archives Advisory Council, the National Historical Publications and Records Commission, the Association of Records Managers and Administrators and other national records management organizations, and members or representatives of the families of former Presidents with Federal Presidential Libraries.

5. Placement of NARS

The Administrator's interest in the placement of NARS in the Federal system is welcomed. It is hoped that he will continue his investigation, in consultation with the groups noted in 4, above, of a new and perhaps drastically revised relationship between NARS and GSA for the mutual benefit of both organizations, for the Federal government, and for the general public. Functional autonomy for the archival mission of NARS should be the minimum goal sought. Total organizational independence is the ideal goal.

A GUEST EDITORIAL

Preserving vital 'scraps of paper'

In 1914, when Germany violated a treaty promising that Belgium would be forever neutral, German propagandists mocked the pact as "a scrap of paper."

Kaiser Bill's cavalier spokesmen made no friends with that quip, and not only because treaties are presumably solemn commitments. Another reason is that "scraps of paper" are the raw materials from which history is extruded — both cosmic history (the Declaration of Independence, say) and personal chronicles (a marriage certificate, for example). To scorn such scraps is to be ignorant that the past offers lessons to the future.

As Governor-elect Winter recently pointed out to the Society of Mississippi Archivists, Mississippi boasts of the nation's second-oldest state archives. But Winter is commendably concerned that Mississippi has either fallen behind, or could.

Among the problems Winter mentioned in his statement to the archivists, several are especially pressing:

- Insufficient personnel, outdated equipment and shrinking storage space for archives;

• Lack of professionally prepared persons for archival work;

• Lack of understanding about an archivist's job — a lack of understanding that makes it difficult to gain political and public support for archival projects; and, most critically,

- Lack of a state records-management law.

Mississippi's failure to enact a comprehensive, systematic state records law must be rectified by the Legislature. "Under present legislation" Winter said, "there is no procedure whereby the preservation of any state record is assured."

Many other states (compared to Mississippi, most of them Johnnies-come-lately to records-management) have surged ahead of our state in the creation of historical-record commissions and the enactment of records-management laws.

Winter has pledged his good offices to the resolution of Mississippi's archival problems. He has also pledged to expand participation in the National Historical Publications & Records Commission. But more needs to be done. And only the Legislature can do it.

Thursday, January 10, 1980 The Clarion-Ledger

THE EDITOR NOTES - *****

Many favorable comments have been received about Governor Winter's statements carried in the last issue. For those members not having access to the Clarion-Ledger, their editorial response is reprinted above.

The NHPRC news this time is an abbreviated attempt to share some of the comments about the Commission and the state boards that are being made. When our board is appointed, it is to be hoped that they will acquaint themselves thoroughly with the problems, and the accomplishments of the others, and profit by that knowledge. That, at least, will provide some small solace for our inability to have participated much thus far.

A couple of articles this time on provincial records of Mississippi. Pat Galloway reports on her revision of the French provincial transcripts,

and Joe Castle relates the odyssey of the colonial judicial records of French Louisiana.

John Sobotka, in discussing his work with the Eastland papers, carries on the commentary begun last time by Charlotte Capers on the disposition of the papers of elected public officials. Bob Phillips, English professor at MSU, takes us to task for our traditional neglect of Mississippi literary archival materials.

One new feature in this issue is an expanded reporting of accessions and openings. This information is provided by member institutions to improve accessibility to our archival resources, and also to acquaint everyone with current collecting activity.

- hth

Accessions, cont.

Jefferson Davis Collection
1886

Two items

Addition to Jefferson Davis Collection: autographed letter signed (30 August 1886) from Davis and autographed carte de visite signed (n.d.), framed. In the letter addressed to "Mrs. Kell," Davis expresses regret that he has not a better photograph than that enclosed and mentions the death in Mississippi of a brother-in-law "who was on the Sumter and Alabama."

Deermound Plantation Papers

c 1910-1950

c 27 cubic feet

Addition to the Deermound Plantation Papers: documentation of operation of a large Mississippi Delta plantation.

Donated by Mrs. W. G. Somerville, Minter City, Mississippi.

Joan Williams Collection

1970

.5 linear feet

Typescript (with emendations) and galleys for the novel The Wintering (published by Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971).

NHPRC News, cont.

was higher than expected.

Eva Mosely was critical of state coordinators who used evaluative criteria on a local level which was not used by the Commission on a national level. How can the Commission be assured that the state boards conform to Commission guidelines? Hackman noted that there is no "fail-safe" system to insure that all state boards always follow national guidelines. The guidelines for evaluation are distributed to the boards and it is assumed that they follow them.

Marvin Whiting (Birmingham Public Library and a member of the Alabama board) cautioned the audience against being too negative about the present board system. He is in favor of the present system, and he likes the tension precipitated by such a system.

John Burns (Washington State Guide Project) noted the difficulties facing state boards without statutory authority; state boards are not fixed in federal law. He has faced a number of administrative hassles in state government in setting up his program. He also noted that Proposition 13 is leading to cutbacks in the states. Many state boards will not be able to do much even if they wanted to.

CORRECTIONS AND AMPLIFICATIONS

More disaster data:

A Conservation Bibliography for Librarians, Archivists, and Administrators, by Carolyn Clark Morrow and Steven B. Schoenly. Troy, NY: The Whitson Publishing Company, Inc. \$18.50.

A Conservation Policy Statement for Research Libraries, by Carolyn Clark Morrow. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign: Graduate School of Library Science's Publications Office, \$2 prepaid.



THE JUDICIAL RECORDS OF COLONIAL LOUISIANA

By Joseph D. Castle
Assoc. Curator, Colonial Archives
Louisiana Historical Center
Louisiana State Museum
New Orleans, Louisiana

The judicial records of colonial Louisiana are a rich but basically untapped source for the study of Louisiana history. These documents, the records of the French Superior Council (1714-1769) and the Spanish Cabildo (1769-1803) contain a wide variety of civil and criminal proceedings that greatly illuminate the economic, social, and political life of colonial Louisiana. These documents (approximately a half million pages, and 247 linear feet) include a large number of successions as well as attempts by creditors to recover commercial obligations. Furthermore, the judicial proceedings contain a wealth of biographical, sociological, commercial and architectural data concerning the inhabitants of colonial Louisiana. Among the inventories of plantations and households, for example, are land surveys, architectural descriptions of houses, accounts of the administration of estates, business and personal contracts, correspondence, copies of wills, marriage contracts, and parish baptismal, marriage and burial records. Also included within the judicial records are petitions to the governing officials from slaves (both Indian and Negro) for emancipation, from merchants for licenses to conduct public sales of their goods, from ship captains for absolution from responsibility for losses suffered at sea, and from traders requesting permission to engage in commerce with Europe, the French West Indies and the English colonies in North America.

The material contained in these proceedings offer the researcher a rare glimpse into the everyday life of colonial Louisiana. While most other repositories contain official pronouncements, laws, and correspondence, the Louisiana Historical Center's Colonial Archives document the lives of a wide cross-section of Louisiana residents, wealthy and indigent, black and white, free and slave.

They relate public and private feuds and business ventures as well as the political and economic evolution of the colony and are indispensable to the understanding of life in French and Spanish Louisiana.

The history of these judicial records (commonly called the "Black Boxes") - their care and abuse, their organization and fragmentation - is almost as fascinating as the nature of their contents. During the course of the past two and a half centuries, they have undergone a strange odyssey, alternately subjected to neglect, looting, reorganization, and physical and chemical deterioration. This story, however, is not entirely negative. In the past sixty years, there have been several serious attempts to preserve the judicial records, organize them and make them available for research.

The early history of these records is tied closely to the development of the Louisiana Historical Society, which was formed in 1847. The Society concerned itself initially with gathering documents and transcriptions of primary materials that relate to the history of Louisiana. In 1848, the Louisiana state legislature formally appointed the Society as the depository of all public documents, state papers and journals. In 1860, the legislature moved the Society headquarters to Baton Rouge. Two years later, however, Federal troops captured Baton Rouge. This resulted in the scattering of the archives in the custody of the Society. Both Federal and Confederate troops looted the manuscripts which were removed to the surrounding grounds of the burning State House. After the war, the Society tried, with only partial success, to recover the documents.

In 1877, the legislature moved the Society's headquarters from Baton Rouge to New Orleans. From the 1860s through

(Continued on p. 12)

Colonial Louisiana, cont.

the early 1890s, however, the Society endured a period of inactivity, and its archives were moved from pillar to post, finally coming to rest in storage at the Tilton Library of Tulane University. With the revival of the Louisiana Historical Society in the 1890s, there came the first published references to "a number of wooden boxes containing judicial papers of colonial times" and the first suggestion that these records should be organized and classified. Despite repeated calls for such action, the judicial records remained in their chaotic state until 1914, when the Society transferred the manuscripts in its custody to a new home at the recently established Louisiana State Museum in the Cabildo.

Almost immediately, the Society made an arrangement with William Price of Yale University to undertake the mammoth task of preparing a card index and a partial translation of the French portion of the "black boxes." Price worked for about a year and a half, from 1914 to 1916, and made fairly good progress. His report to the Society offered scholars of Louisiana history their first glimpse of the tremendous value of the documents. This early inkling stimulated further interest in the organization and preparation of the records for researchers. In 1916, because of poor working conditions, a low salary and political differences with the Society, Price left the project.

After unsuccessful attempts to convince the Carnegie Institution and the Library of Congress to fund its project, the Society enlisted the support of William Radcliffe Irby. His financial assistance enabled the Society to engage Heloise H. Cruzat, educated at the Ursuline Convent, and Laura Porteous, who attended Newcomb College, to continue the work of William Price. Mrs. Cruzat, working with the French Superior Council records, and Miss Porteous, with the Spanish Cabildo documents, prepared synopses and translations that were published irregularly in the Louisiana Historical Quarterly from 1920 to 1948. By 1925, however, the Irby funds for this work were exhausted, and the project was taken over by the Louisiana State Museum. In 1936, Works Progress

Administration (WPA) funds expanded and augmented the project.

During the WPA project, calendars were prepared for both the French and Spanish collections, and efforts were made to "restore" deteriorated portions of the records. The documents were also reorganized. The collections were not returned to their original provenance. Those engaged in the project reorganized the French collection according to arbitrary subject headings, and the Spanish records according to chronological order.

Unfortunately, during the period from the late 1940s to the mid-1960s, no action was taken to renew the work of organization. The documents languished without order in the notorious "black boxes" and metal file cabinets in a vault on the first floor of the Presbytere that had no temperature or humidity controls. From 1964 to 1966, the Friends of the Cabildo (the associate group of the Museum) enlisted the voluntary efforts of Mrs. Connie Griffith, Special Collections Librarian at the Tilton Library of Tulane University. Mrs. Griffith placed the Cabildo records in chronological order and put them in acid-free Hollinger boxes. The documents were transferred to their present location on the second floor of the Presbytere in a humidity-controlled vault.

In 1974, a Museum staff member with training in the fields of paper conservation and archival arrangement began to clean and delaminate those documents that the WPA had treated earlier. The French Superior Council Records were removed from their old wooden boxes, placed in acid-free folders and arranged chronologically in Hollinger boxes. The collection of the Spanish Cabildo records was continued.

In 1975, the Museum gave top priority to the development of the judicial records and began formulating plans to implement this decision. The Louisiana Historical Center was established in January of 1977, in an effort to develop the Louisiana State Museum's potential as a facility for the study of Louisiana's history and culture. The Museum's

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The Mississippi Provincial Archives: French Dominion Project at MDAH

By Patricia Galloway

Editor, MPA:FD

Mississippi Dept. of Archives and History

(Ed. Note: The publication of Mississippi Provincial Archives: French Dominion, Volumes IV and V (edited by Dunbar Rowland, Translated by Albert Godfrey Sanders, revised by Patricia Galloway) is anticipated in fall/winter 1980.)

In 1905, four years after the foundation of MDAH, Dunbar Rowland, director of the Department, traveled to Europe in a pioneering effort to address the problem of securing for Mississippi copies of documents in foreign archives which treated of her provincial history. He visited London and Paris and apportioned equal amounts from a legislative grant of \$1000 to contracts for transcripts of such documents from both countries. It was decided that the most fruitful document in France for Mississippi history was the series C13A (General Correspondence of Louisiana) of the Archives of the Colonies. Rowland left with a copyist in Paris a statement of guidelines for selection of manuscripts to be copied, and from these guidelines the copyist prepared a calendar of such documents from C13A as were relevant to the history of Mississippi. Both the calendar and the guidelines were published in Rowland's 1905-06 Annual Report. On the basis of this calendar, which was not always completely accurate and which omitted a number of documents of interest because the guidelines could not anticipate everything, the choice of documents for transcription was made, and from 1906 to 1912 the copying proceeded, resulting in thirty-two large bound volumes of transcripts.

Rowland's desire to make the people of his state aware of their history did not stop with the binding and preservation of the transcripts. He felt that a series of translations of the documents would better serve this purpose, translations to stand alongside the volume of English documents already published as the first of a planned

series and a similar planned series of Spanish documents. To this end he worked with Albert Godfrey Sanders, professor of Romance languages at Millsaps College, to produce the three published volumes of annotated translations in the MPA:FD series between 1927 and 1932. One large further volume was planned, but financial conditions at the time prohibited its publication, and, at sometime during the 1930s, the typescript of this fourth volume was erroneously bound as though it were that of the third volume, and presumed lost. At Rowland's death in 1937 the series stood uncompleted. Then, in 1974, shortly after the death of Sanders, the binding error was discovered and the manuscript resurfaced. Four years later, MDAH offered me the opportunity to edit it for publication in two volumes, and I began the work in April of 1979.

As it stood, the translation was not ready for publication. More than forty years of scholarship made much of the annotation outmoded and incomplete, and the style of the translation itself was more wooden than would now be acceptable. In some instances it was even gently bowdlerized: military men writing to their colleagues did not mince words. There was, therefore, a need to revise the translation. I was afforded additional help by the complete microfilm copy of C13A which had been acquired by MDAH in 1970. This meant that besides being able to go to the source for obscure passages, I was also able to consider including additional translations of documents which had not even been known to the original editors. The first six months of my work, then, were occupied in revising the translation and adding to it some twenty documents, bringing the total number to 154. My goal was to arrive at a version which would be as accurate and literal as possible without being unreadable, so that historians wishing to make use of the original documents might find it a

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Mississippi Provincial, cont.

reliable guide to their contents.

The second stage of the work, in which I am now engaged, is the annotation. Examination of the footnotes in the first three volumes of the series will show that there is rather a bias toward identifying only the more prominent French military men. This bias is probably due mostly to the fact that little supplementary documentation was then available for the period. I have tried to rectify this situation somewhat by shortening the typescript's biographical notes on well-known French officials in favor of references to secondary sources and adding, where possible, notes on the trappers, traders, missionaries, merchants and lower officers who actually made history "on the ground." And since the emphasis of these present volumes is - as it must necessarily be for the 1730-1763 period which they cover - upon French-Indian relations, I have attempted to do the same sort of job for the Indians who were so important to the colony's history. I have also tried to make a few helpful additions to the scholarly apparatus for all five volumes, including a cumulative bibliography and a catalogue of biographical references. This annotation is the most difficult part of my task, for even now material is scant in many of these areas, but it is hoped that the work can be completed by late spring, when the two volumes should be ready to go to press.

As I have said, most of the material in volumes four and five bears in some way upon French-Indian relations during the period. Readers already acquainted with the series will have noticed that the period to be covered overlaps with the periods included in volumes one (to 1740) and three (to 1743), and it is true that the documents dating from 1730-1743 which are to be published have been chosen with a view to filling in the gaps left in these earlier volumes. For the succeeding period, however, the documents attempt to cover the ground completely, and covering the ground from 1744-1763 means recounting the rebellion of the Choctaw Chief Red Shoe and the Choctaw civil war of 1748-51,

and then moving into the events of the French and Indian War as seen from the French side and from the perspective of the Old Southwest. Dealings with the Choctaw nation are paramount, though towards the end the importance of the Creeks and Cherokees, and even the Shawnees, begins to increase. The Chickasaws, always partial to the English and essentially driven into their arms after sheltering the remnants of the Natchez tribe in 1729, are always present in the background, now asking for peace and now attempting to coax the Choctaws away from allegiance to the French.

Material in these documents for several of these tribes goes far beyond John R. Swanton's ethnographic accounts, which were written from 1900-1931 before ready access to French archival material was possible. The history of the Choctaw tribe, particularly, and the social changes which it underwent as a result of its contact with whites, can be traced much more clearly through this material than has hitherto been possible. An especially important theme which emerges is the exploitation of the French/English rivalry by the brilliant chief Red Shoe to finance his meteoric rise within the tribal power structure from a "simple warrior" in 1730 to the leader of the most powerful faction of the tribe by the late 1740s. The fact that he exploited the traditional moiety division in the tribe to secure the support of the moiety to which he belonged, and that this support was paid for with English goods, meant that his rebellion and the civil war which followed his death constituted a major blow to the tribe's traditional culture.

This is just one topic of Indian ethnohistory which is covered in the two new volumes. Widely scattered references give evidence of an institutionalized priesthood and concept of sanctuary among the Quapaw of Arkansas; a suggestion that the remnant of the Natchez who fled to the Chickasaws were eventually reduced to slavery by them; and details of the customs surrounding the declaration of war among the

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SOME THOUGHTS ON CONGRESSIONAL PAPERS

By John Sobotka, Archivist
The Law Archives
University of Mississippi

Four years ago this month, I went to Washington, D.C., to be a member of Senator James O. Eastland's staff. I had been a graduate student in history at the University of Mississippi when I was offered the Washington assignment. The three years I spent in Washington working on Senator Eastland's papers were a fascinating experience, and the project led to the transferral of the Senator's papers to the University of Mississippi Law Archives. Over a two year period, we shipped in excess of 1600 linear feet of files to Ole Miss - materials which represented Senator Eastland's thirty-six years of service in the Senate.

In my remarks, I will make references to my experiences with the acquisition of the Eastland papers. While each acquisition is different, I believe there are basic rules that are universal enough to be applied to other Congressional collections (and perhaps also to the papers of officials on the state or local levels). I think my comments may be helpful to those people who have an interest in acquiring or using these types of materials.

My records management training in the military had made me aware of the need to periodically purge office files. I had been used to sending most of the previous year's files to the staging area for a brief retention period before destruction, with only a few inches of files carried forth in active status. However, I soon found out that in the case of Congressional files, there aren't rigid rules governing records disposition. While government storage facilities are available at Suitland, Maryland, the individual senator or representative can stack obsolete files in Senate or House office building basements or attic lockers, throw them away, ship them to his home, or send them to an institution, state archival

department or historical society. The National Archives, Library of Congress and Senate Historical Office can offer advice as to records maintenance and disposition, but it is up to the member to decide what to do.

In Senator Eastland's office, the practice for many years had been to store obsolete files in several places in the Dirksen and Russell Senate Office buildings. My first eighteen months on the job were spent in the Russell Building attic, locating and inventorying the files I found there. These materials ranged from 1941 to the mid-fifties, and were scattered down the attic corridor which extended about the length of a city block. Later, I came across other files in the Dirksen Building sub-basement and in several subcommittee offices.

My last year and a half was spent in the Senator's main office, where a substantial portion of my responsibilities involved staff work. While my progress on the processing of the papers suffered some as a result, I welcomed my new duties as I considered that if I were to have a part in the interpretation of Senator Eastland's record and activities in the Senate, I needed to have a basic idea of how his office operated, and what tasks his staff members performed. My work in the Senator's Dirksen Building office enabled me to get to know his staff members, most of whom had been with him for many years. I was able to deal first hand with the creation of case files, legislative materials and routine office correspondence. While the nature of these papers and their filing changed over the years, I learned the Senator's office procedures and his staff's methods of maintaining the files and disposing of them when they were no longer current. I have found this knowledge indispensable in my work on the Eastland papers at the University of Mississippi this past year.

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Congressional Papers, cont.

With my experience in Senator Eastland's office in mind, I am a firm believer in placing, whenever possible, a member of the receiving institution's staff in the congressman's or senator's office to help in coordinating the initial processing, packing and shipping of the papers. It would be ideal if this person were placed on the office payroll, but other arrangements could suffice. If the receiving institution is a college or university, the person sent to Washington logically might be a graduate student with interests in archival work. The important consideration is to have someone on the scene who can manage the job of physically handling the papers (which often times may be buried in dirty storage lockers), and be responsible for the orderly shipment of the materials back to the receiving institution.

Most Congressional offices don't have a staff member who can conveniently be released to do this kind of work, so it is very helpful if the institution can provide the manpower. While the resident or intern arrangement is designed for acquiring Congressional papers, I could envisage some sort of variant being used in certain cases on state and local government levels, perhaps using student interns to help with the physical tasks of acquisition.

In my experience with Congressional acquisitions, I have encountered differing degrees of restrictions on the papers that were donated. From an ideal standpoint, the fewer the restrictions the better, but most Congressional donors will insist on certain restrictions being placed on the use of their papers. In my work as a staff member in Senator Eastland's office, I dealt with series of records, such as constituent case files, that in my judgment have archival values, but due to their nature require some restrictions on their use. My feeling is that Congressional papers are valuable enough to warrant accepting them under most conditions, unless the do-

nor's contemplated restrictions are entirely out of reason.

In the nearly two months between the November, 1976, national election and the beginning of the 95th Congress in January, 1977, I observed several instances where unexpectedly defeated senators, who had made no provisions for the disposition of their papers, departed the Senate leaving many of their files behind. From the vantage point of my attic office, I watched the defeated members' staffers hurriedly packing the office files, or, in some cases, dumping the files in trash carts destined for the Senate waste paper baling room. After the unexpected November election results, there simply wasn't the time to locate and pack the papers properly. I can understand this problem was compounded by some departing Senators not having given any thought to where they wanted their papers placed back in the home state.

Even when a member announces a specific retirement date, the time to start shipping papers is not three months before the end of the concluding term. For Congressional papers - and papers of other public officials - the task of packing and shipping, if done properly, is tedious and complicated. The only way to insure that the project goes off with a minimum of difficulties is to plan carefully and far in advance. This means that the officeholder should negotiate with an institution for placement of his papers early in his first term, and ship obsolete files to that institution on a regular basis thereafter. The material then reaches the receiving institution in an orderly manner, and there isn't the end of term deluge which can lead to improper inventorying and loss of valuable materials. While the disposition of the papers of elected public figures on the state and local level is more closely regulated by law than in the case of Congressional officeholders, the concept of organized transfer still is valid.

The National Archives and the Library of Congress advise Congressional

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THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI LITERARY COLLECTIONS

By Robert L. Phillips
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John Ray Skates points out in his bicentennial history of Mississippi a fact that most Mississippians by now must surely recognize. While in the past, Mississippians have entertained the notion that the state has produced great political leaders, the truth is that if Mississippi has any claim to prominence in the world, that prominence is due more to literary genius than anything else. The state that gave the world William Faulkner, Richard Wright, Tennessee Williams, Eudora Welty, Walker Percy, Elizabeth Spencer, Shelby Foote, Berry Morgan, Ellen Douglas, James Seay, William Mills, Barry Hannah and a host of others has been incredibly slow to recognize the great value to the state of this extraordinary outpouring. We should have done better years ago; maybe now we are doing better by our principal intellectual treasure. The result of those years of popular neglect has been that many of the documents - manuscripts; type-scripts of early versions of poems, stories and plays; early editions; collections of letters; diaries; notes - documents fundamental to the academic and scholarly evaluation of Mississippi's literary genius are not to be found in Mississippi.

The scholar who is interested in pursuing the history of Mississippi's culture must spend days in the libraries at the University of Virginia, the University of North Carolina, the U.S. Military Academy, the University of Texas, Harvard and Berkeley. He must travel to Chicago, New York, even Paris. To be sure, the Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MDAH) has a fine collection, particularly of materials relating to the career of Eudora Welty. There are other fine resources - Faulkner and Stark Young documents at Ole Miss, Hodding Carter's papers at Mississippi State University (MSU). There are collections at the University of Southern

Mississippi, Mississippi College (MC), Jackson State and Tougaloo. But we have not done enough.

We have not done enough because, historically, we have cared too little to make a substantial public commitment either to the acquisition of valuable and expensive collections or to the adequate maintenance of what we have. Most archivists are well aware, more than aware, of the prevailing conditions, and the scholars depend on the archivists. Collectors bid up prices for documents; archives find it is a matter of great prestige to own large collections, and they compete for benefactors who will finance acquisitions. Some archives have been particularly successful: Virginia has its Clifton Waller Barrett Collection; North Carolina has its Southern Historical Collection, sponsored in part by funds from the Kenan and Morehead foundations; Southeast Missouri State University has just opened its very fine Louis Daniel Brodsky Collection of Faulkner materials. Mississippi's Department of Archives and History or her universities should be more prominently represented in the bidding, whether support comes from public or private sources. Memphis State University's interest in regional culture is understandable, but, unless we are willing to concede that New Orleans and Memphis are actually the principal cities of Mississippi, we should be willing to make the efforts that that fine university is making toward the acquisition of a collection.

The collections that are in Mississippi are for the most part carefully maintained and generously made available for use. MDAH and the state's universities provide about all the services they can. Here again, however, there is the problem of inadequate resources and political complications. MSU had to wait many months to apply for the grant needed to describe the

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THE MASSACHUSETTS SUPERIOR COURT RECORDS PROJECT

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7:3 (November, 1979), 2.

Appraisal is one of the most difficult tasks faced by those responsible for historical records. Which records have archival value? Which records can be destroyed? These are hard questions to answer. Archivists, curators, records managers and custodians, lacking guidelines, have retained large quantities of records for fear of destroying valuable materials. Yet permanent retention of records with "borderline" value is no longer an affordable luxury.

There is no better example of the difficulties of records appraisal than the situation faced by the Massachusetts Superior Court system in recent years. Extremely valuable court records, spanning the years from earliest settlement in 1620 to the present, were deteriorating rapidly in 14 county courthouses throughout the state. Moreover, the volume of these records was growing at an extraordinary rate and it was clear to both scholars and court clerks that a plan of action was needed. In response to this need, Chief Justice Edward F. Hennessey established the Massachusetts Judicial Records Committee (MJRC) to formulate, implement and oversee policies involving judicial records.

With the aid of an NHPRC records grant, the MJRC organized a project to inventory all Superior Court records and to make recommendations for future action. The results of the survey were published in 1977 as The Records of the Massachusetts Superior Court and its Predecessors: An Inventory and Guide.

The report recommended complete retention and centralized storage of all materials up to 1859. The survey team, led by lawyer/historian Michael S. Hindus, declined to make recommendations regarding files created after 1859 because of their substantial bulk and undetermined value.

The report highlighted the fact that the courts would face serious and complex problems in appraising their late 19th- and 20th-century records. Clearly it would take more time and money than was

available at that time to devise a plan of action for these records.

In August, 1978, with the support of a second NHPRC grant, Hindus and his associates, Theodore M. Hammet and Barbara M. Hobson, and the MJRC formed an advisory board to discuss the issues involved in the project.

The board included legal historians Stanley N. Katz, Barbara Hanawalt, and L. Kinvin Wroth; social historians Neil Irwin Painter, Elizabeth H. Pleck, and Maris A. Vinovskis; and social scientist John Conklin, Michael Soto, and Herbert Walberg. In addition, the project director and his associates sought the advice of several MJRC members, especially John P. Concannon, Edgar Bellefontaine, Robert Brink, Robert Bloom, and Nicholas Olsberg.

After much discussion and consideration of alternatives, the staff and the advisory board agreed that sampling techniques offered the best possible solution. A pilot sample revealed little historically interesting information, and led to the conclusion that sampling techniques could be used to reduce the bulk of the materials without undermining their value for historians. To test their belief, the staff sampled the post-1859 Superior Court case files for two counties--Suffolk, which includes Boston, and Hampshire, located in the western part of the state.

Hindus and his associates used the information from their two-county sample to devise a basic checklist of recommendations for the retention and disposition of Superior Court records from 1859 to 1959. They recommended the retention of all files for one major county for record linkage purposes, the retention of all the files for very small counties, all divorce and naturalization files and all files for periods when there had been substantial previous file destruction. They also recommended that systematic samples be taken for all other counties with the percentage of the sample reduced incrementally as the volume of the case

(Continued on p. 19)

Carter papers because of an unfortunate disagreement between state and federal officials. There are other problems with collections that are not adequately described. The Bellaman Collection at MC and Tougaloo's collection of documents having to do with black Mississippi writers could be more fully described.

Most collections that I have seen are well-maintained, but then there are those few others where valuable material is in small libraries that do not have adequate space or funding. I have seen a file of an antebellum newspaper, a paper not mentioned in the Mississippiana Union List of Newspapers and not available on microfilm, falling apart and plagued by silverfish. The paper has some Southwest humor sketches, probably not original, but valuable, nevertheless.

The major libraries around the world have been far more successful than Mississippi's libraries in acquiring the basic archival resources of Mississippi's writers. But there are, of course, those advantages that Mississippi enjoys that are unavailable to Virginia or Southwest Missouri. These writers were and are, after all, Mississippians, and in Mississippi we have created local resources other places cannot create. Some public libraries, the Meridian Library is a fine example, have created over the years vertical files that now are of great value. The State Library Commission also has made a commendable effort in this regard.

Collections of documents of public officials are historically important; the Department of Archives and History has as its proper function the collection, care, and maintenance of those records. But MDAH cannot replace the efforts of local archivists around the state. Mississippi's glamorous literary figures have attracted collectors around the world, but the land that produced those major figures also produced a host of minor ones. These writers are important, too. Their contributions perhaps enabled the major writers to be major. Maybe not, but the topic is one that will some day be fully studied. Archivists

around this state are creating the resources for this study, and I, for one, am quite appreciative.

It is gratifying to find that public officials, notably the new governor, have a great interest in preserving Mississippi's history. On the other hand, it is unfortunate that the state has not had the resources or the interest to allocate what resources it might have found for the acquisition of more documents having to do with the development of the intellect and the fine arts in the state. But times are changing. We do not seem to be so sensitive about what some took to be slurs on the state and its institutions which they found in the writings of Faulkner, Wright, Foote and others. Maybe the change in attitude will benefit those of us who are interested in the fine literature Mississippi has produced.

Massachusetts, cont.

load increased.

Finally, Hindus and his associates recommended retention of the files of all cases appealed to the Supreme Judicial Court and all files 1-1/2 inches or thicker for the years 1860-1889, 1-3/4 inches or thicker for the years 1890-1919, and 2 inches or thicker for the years 1920-1959. Using these recommendations, the Superior Courts of Massachusetts can now begin to provide for the orderly retention and disposition of case files in their custody.

It is too soon to say whether the Massachusetts Superior Court Records Project has been a success. The plan of action proposed by Hindus and his associates must be weighed by the MJRC and the courts, and implementation of the recommendations is the real test. But the long-run implications of this project are also noteworthy and court records. The project report, to be published by G. K. Hall Publishers in Boston, will likely serve as a pilot and perhaps a model for efforts elsewhere to reduce the growing volume of case files and at the same time preserve valuable archival materials.

Colonial Louisiana, cont.

Library and Archives divisions were combined to form the Center. In the same year, a grant was received from the National Endowment of the Humanities to calendar, edit and microfilm the entire collection. Three additional curators/archivists were added to the staff of the Center.

Because of the peculiar nature of the Cabildo records (i.e., lengthy, complex lawsuits and successions) these records require an extensive method of calendaring. These calendars reflect the nature of the documents, the principal litigants and the various spellings of their names, locations of plantations and homes and the judgments rendered by the court. The French calendars, unlike the Spanish ones, are limited to brief descriptions of the materials contained in the judicial records of the Superior Council because the French documents lend themselves better to this mode of calendaring. At the present rate, the Spanish Cabildo calendars will be completed some time in late 1980, while the calendars for the French Superior Council will be available for researchers in 1982. The Museum has entered into an agreement with the Genealogical Society of Utah to microfilm its colonial records with the micro-filming slated for completion in mid-1981. This project will preserve the documents for posterity and at the same time make them available to a wider scholarly audience.

At the present time, the researcher will find several problems in any attempted use of the judicial records. These records, for instance, present problems in organization and legibility. Documents were extracted from their original order and reclassified according to arbitrary subject headings. During the present calendaring project, these documents are being returned to their provenance, although indexes of their artificial subject headings are being retained.

The extremely difficult paleography and advanced deterioration of the documents will also hamper the researcher. Many of the documents within the French Superior Council records were written by the individual litigants themselves, rather than

trained court officials. This haphazard system produced many varieties of poor, virtually illiterate handwriting. The different secretarial hands within both the French and Spanish documents will undeniably prove troublesome. The documents moreover, have suffered from the ravages of nature and some unfortunate good intentions. Nearly every document contains a high acid content, insect damage, foxing and discoloration. The worst of the physical deterioration resulted from the abuses of the WPA during the 1930s and 1940s. The WPA applied large quantities of scotch tape to many of the documents. The documents were encased in cellophane and stacked in wooden boxes and metal filing cabinets. Although the cellophane and most of the scotch tape have been removed, the residues left behind made many of the documents brittle, and some of them remain extremely difficult to examine. About 10% of the collection has been so badly damaged that they cannot be used.

Presently, researchers wishing to use the colonial records are restricted to the guides or indexes, in English with abstracts, which were published in the Louisiana Historical Quarterly. While historians and genealogists have been forced to use these guides in lieu of the originals, it is well known that they are not complete and contain many inaccuracies in translations. The WPA compiled another guide to these records - the so-called "Black Books" - ninety-four volumes of indexes of the documents in addition to those in the LHQ. These, too, are incomplete and contain numerous mistakes. The guides (or calendars) contain errors concerning names, places, occupations and the text of the cases. They also emphasize the repetitive judicial procedures of the French and Spanish courts, ignoring the factual, relevant information. The WPA microfilmed the French segment of the collection, but the quality of the film is very poor and mostly illegible. The documents, furthermore, were microfilmed at random, without any order, organization or target. These films are simply not adequate.

These two guides are supplemented by a card file that gives a genealogical digest of the data contained in the

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Colonial Louisiana, cont.

French and Spanish records. The cards are arranged alphabetically by the names of the principal parties in the original documents. There are, however, again inaccuracies and omissions, and some of the cards have been lost over the years. In addition to the problems presented by the physical conditions of the records and the inadequate finding aids, space for researchers in the Historical Center is limited and the staff, small. The staff will assist researchers in verification and location of the original documents that can be identified from the finding aids.

Upon completion of the calendaring of the judicial records, the Historical Center will prepare an extensive index to the collections. At the present time, the Historical Center intends to record this index into a computer. This computerized index will reference such items as names, places, dates and subjects. A future researcher who is interested in finding all archival citations for slaves in the area upriver from New Orleans between 1780 and 1790, for example, will be able to feed these simple instructions into the computer. Within a few minutes, concise results in the form of a print-out will be available. This process will eliminate many tedious hours of leafing through index cards or calendars. The Historical Center intends at a later date to survey the archival holdings of libraries and other museums throughout the United States and in other countries to locate those manuscript collections that relate to Louisiana. The appropriate collections will then be microfilmed whenever possible and added to the holdings of the Center.

Currently, the Historical Center Archives are located on the second floor of the Presbytere and the Library on the first floor of the Pontalba Apartments in the French Quarter. Early in 1980, the Historical Center will move to the third floor of the newly restored United States Branch Mint located on Esplanade Avenue. The new Center will include an expanded reading room, microfilm room, conservation rooms and an expanded vault. By the

time of the move to the Mint, the Louisiana Historical Center will be a major research facility that will contain a noncirculating reference library of approximately 40,000 books and 10,000 pamphlets, 1500 maps, personal papers, newspapers covering the period 1804-1950, currency, medals and coins.



Congressional Papers, cont.

members to locate an institution, preferably in the home state, that desires their papers and can handle the processing. The Senate Historical Office echoes this advice, and the Senate Historian makes a concerted effort to inform particularly the newer senators of the importance of making appropriate arrangements for the orderly disposition of their obsolete files. But as I have already mentioned, senators and congressmen can do what they wish with their files. Whether they give their papers to their alma mater, an archival department of their state government, or to a private historical society, the choice is up to them. Consequently, in Mississippi or other states, it would be exceedingly difficult to prevail upon Congressional donors to place their papers in one centrally located repository, however convenient that might be for researchers.

I am optimistic about the future preservation of Congressional papers. Especially encouraging is the fact that within the Congress and among the scholarly community, there seems to be a greater awareness of the importance of Congressional papers, and more of these valuable collections are being properly housed in the member's state and made available to researchers.

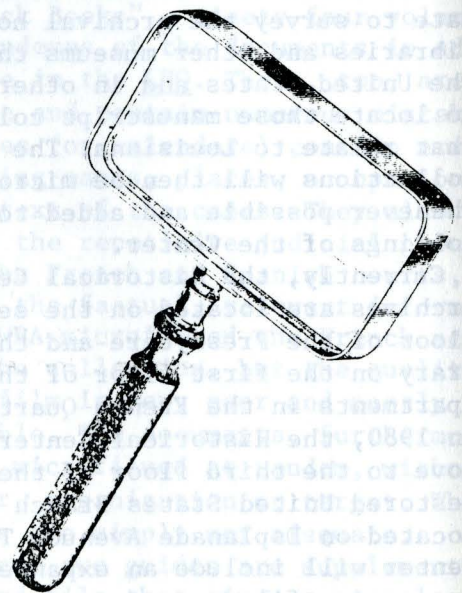
Mississippi Provincial, cont.

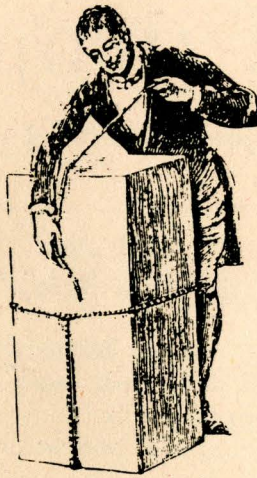
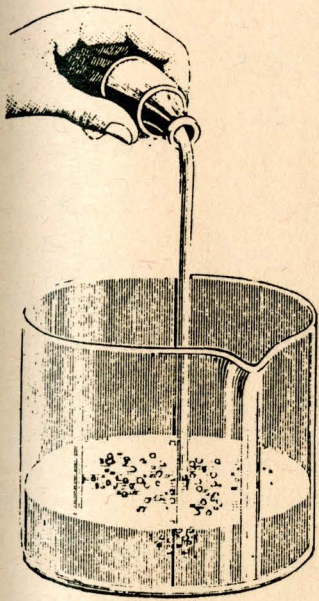
Muskogean tribes. Continual references to the French effort to wipe out the Chickasaws create a running commentary in which the efforts of this tribe to defend its very existence are powerfully suggested.

These documents also make the causes of the French colony's failure, from private greed to public indifference, abundantly clear. They show how the lucrative Indian trade and its control could often prove divisive, as in the case of the feud between Diron d'Artaguet and Perier in the 1730s, when Diron held a monopoly of the Choctaw trade; or the later alleged involvement of the governors Vaudreuil and Kerlerec in that same trade, which was partly the cause of the latter's recall in 1763. Kerlerec's begging letters to the Ministry of Marine throughout the fifties show how well he was prepared to obtain the active partisanship of almost all the Indians of the southeast, including the Cherokees and Creeks, against the English. But because of the English blockade and French indifference to the southern colony until after Canada had fallen, Kerlerec received too few Indian trading goods far too late to make them effective in carrying out the defeat of the southern English colonies which he had planned.

While the publication of these documents will make a significant contribution to our understanding of the later years of the Louisiana colony, they do not contain the whole story. C13A is a treasure, and would be well worth printing in its entirety, but, though it portrays the view of events seen by the government of the colony, only rarely does it contain primary accounts of events. In the selection of additional documents for publication, I have included all of these primary accounts for the period and the area concerned, but this is only the tip of the iceberg. Since C13A is composed primarily of the governor's accounts of events in the colony, such documents appear only when the governor thought it was necessary to send them along in order to substantiate a claim or justify a de-

cision. If, however, the evidence of one of Governor Vaudreuil's letterbooks, which contains all the letters he sent to one group of posts over a period of fifty months, is representative, references to letters received which appear in this letterbook suggest that several thousands of letters from officers, traders and missionaries in direct contact with events have been lost or at least not located. Many of them, no doubt, ended as kindling; many more went back to France with their authors, who made it a practice to keep copies of letters sent. But not all of the French settlers went back to France, and it is reasonable to assume that out of over three thousand letters some at least must still survive, to be discovered in family papers either now lying in our archives or still to be found. In an earlier issue of this newsletter, I offered a list of relevant names, and it is to be hoped that this will have some success in bringing any such documents to light. For if we think that the contents of C13A are valuable, how much more valuable must be the primary accounts upon which the reports in C13A are based.





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